



TITLE:

<News> New Visitor Centre in Mahale Park

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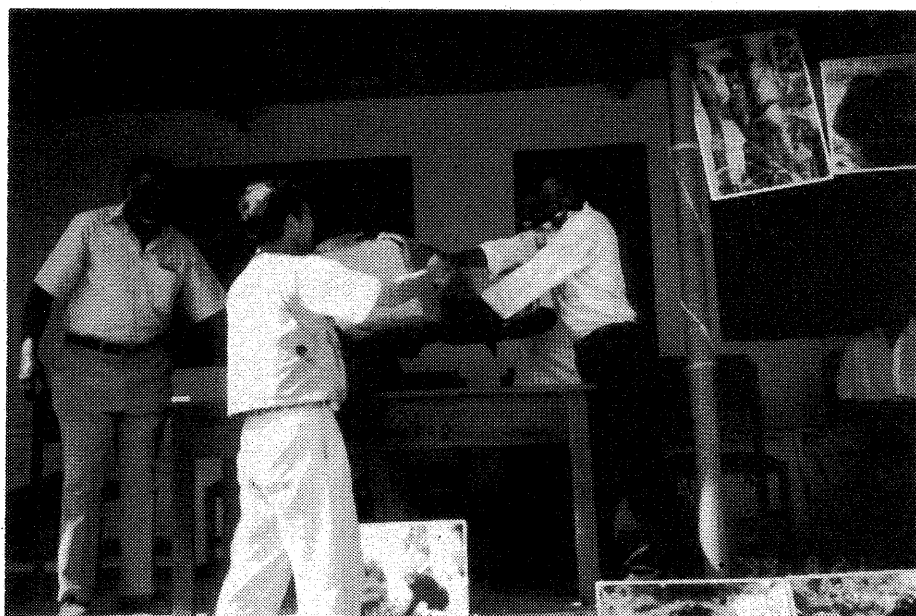
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<NEWS>**New Visitor Centre in Mahale Park**

Since 1997 the Mahale Wildlife Conservation Society has applied for funds to promote conservation activities in west Tanzania from the Japan Environment Corporation, which has a Global Environment Fund for facilitating the activities of conservation NGOs. JEC approved our request and provided ¥1.8 million every year from 1997 to 1999. MWCS has used the funds for 1) public education activities, and 2) establishment of a visitor centre for the centre for promoting future conservation activities.

Public education activities have been conducted mainly by Prof.H.Kayumbo (Chairman, MWCS) and K. Tambila (member, MWCS) of the University of Dar es Salaam. In August 1999, they gave one lecture to the rangers and research staff of the Mahale Park and three lectures in various primary schools in the neighborhood around the park. The construction of the visitor centre was begun in 1998, and it was finally completed in January 2000. The centre was built in Bilenge, where the headquarters of the Mahale Mountains National Park is located. About \$20,000 from JEC was spent on the construction.

In August 1999, color picture panels of chimpanzees, other mammals, birds, fish, and vegetation of the Mahale Park and document panels explaining the history of research, the history of conservation activities, traditional Tongwe life, and ecology and behavior of chimpanzees and other animals, about 50 in total, were donated from MWCS to the Mahale Mountains National Park (Photo 1). These materials, which are being shown in the new visitor centre, are expected to play a great role in educating adults and children about how important the conservation



of the Mahale ecosystem is. These panels were originally manufactured in 1995, when JICA held a major conference to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Mahale research and conservation in the Kilimanjaro Hotel, Dar es Salaam.

*(Reported by T. Nishida,
Co-Chairman, MWCS)*
